



# Temari Wrap

Written By: Ginny Thompson



## TOOLS:

- [Pins \(1\)](#)  
*color-headed.*
- [Scissors \(1\)](#)
- [Sewing needle \(1\)](#)  
*cotton darning or similar, with eye large enough for pearl cotton.*



## PARTS:

- [Styrofoam ball \(1\)](#)  
*2".*
- [Pearl cotton \(2\)](#)  
*2 different colors.*
- [Metallic thread \(1\)](#)  
*metallic thread similar in size to pearl cotton, or a bit finer.*
- [Yarn \(1\)](#)  
*4-ply.*
- [Thread \(1\)](#)  
*plain sewing thread, at least 300 yards.*
- [Paper strip \(1\)](#)  
*about 2" wide, 12" long.*

## SUMMARY

Temari is an ancient Japanese folk art dating back more than 500 years. Temari means “hand” (te) “ball” (mari), relating to both making by and playing with the hands. Originally, balls for games and children were made from bits and scraps of kimono, other clothing, or deer hide. Strips of cloth or leather would be tightly wound into a ball and stitched together to

hold the shape. Since an item carries not only function but beauty in Japanese culture, the stitching became more and more intricate, leading up to the detailed embroideries seen in both historical and present-day creations. Temari evolved from toy to objet d'art. It is carried on today (with some modern adjustments) as a fiber art; temari are made and collected worldwide.

### Step 1 — Wrap the ball.



- Wrap the yarn around the styrofoam ball, keeping it moving at all times to make the wrap random and even. Wrap the sewing thread over the yarn layer, covering the yarn completely. Wrap in all directions to create a surface that does not have warp or weft, similar to a felted surface. Run the end back under the wraps when complete. It needs to be deep enough to take a stitch (usually about 300 yards for a 2" to 3" ball is enough).

## Step 2 — Mark the poles.



- Temari uses relational geometry to place a marking grid on the ball to use as a stitching guide (no measuring tape!). Use a white pin, and pin the end of the paper strip anywhere. Place the pin 1/4" from the end. This spot is now the North Pole. Wrap the strip around the fullest circumference of the ball. Fold the strip to "fit," and trim to this length. Then fold the strip in half and cut a notch at the fold. Re-wrap the strip around the ball, and place a black pin in the notch, which should be directly opposite the North Pole. This is now the South Pole.

## Step 3 — Mark the obi.

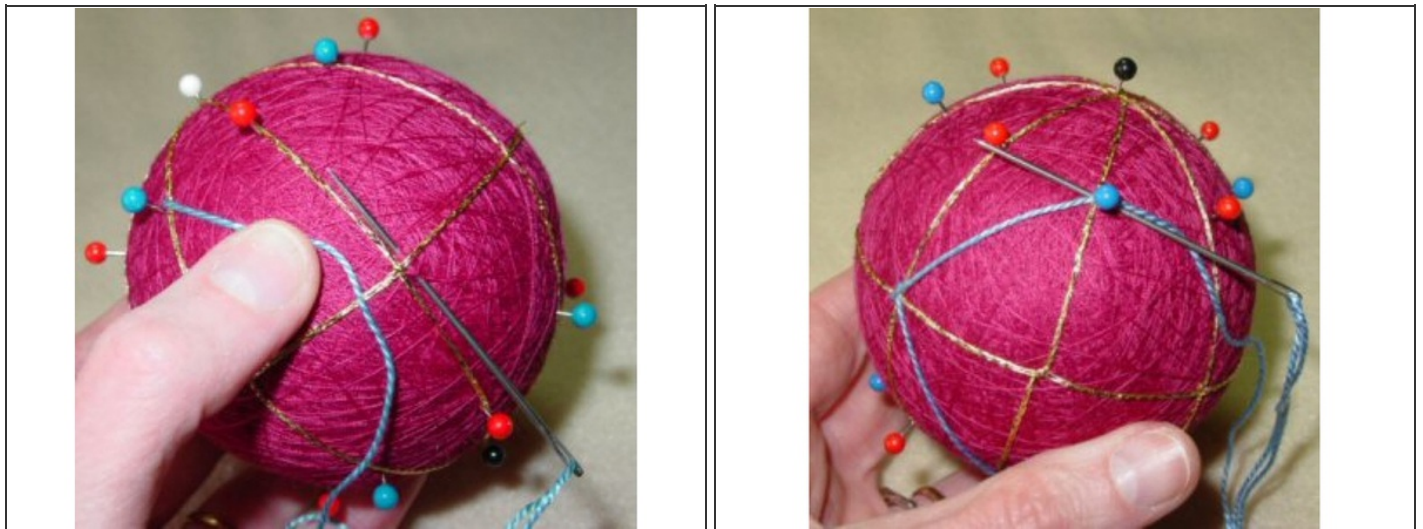


- Fold the strip again, bringing South Pole to North Pole, and cut another notch at the halfway point. Rewrap, and place a red pin at the empty notch. Remove the strip again, fold it into eighths, and place the hole from the North Pole marker at the red pin. Wrap the strip at the widest horizontal point and place a red pin at each notch, marking the equator (called the obi).

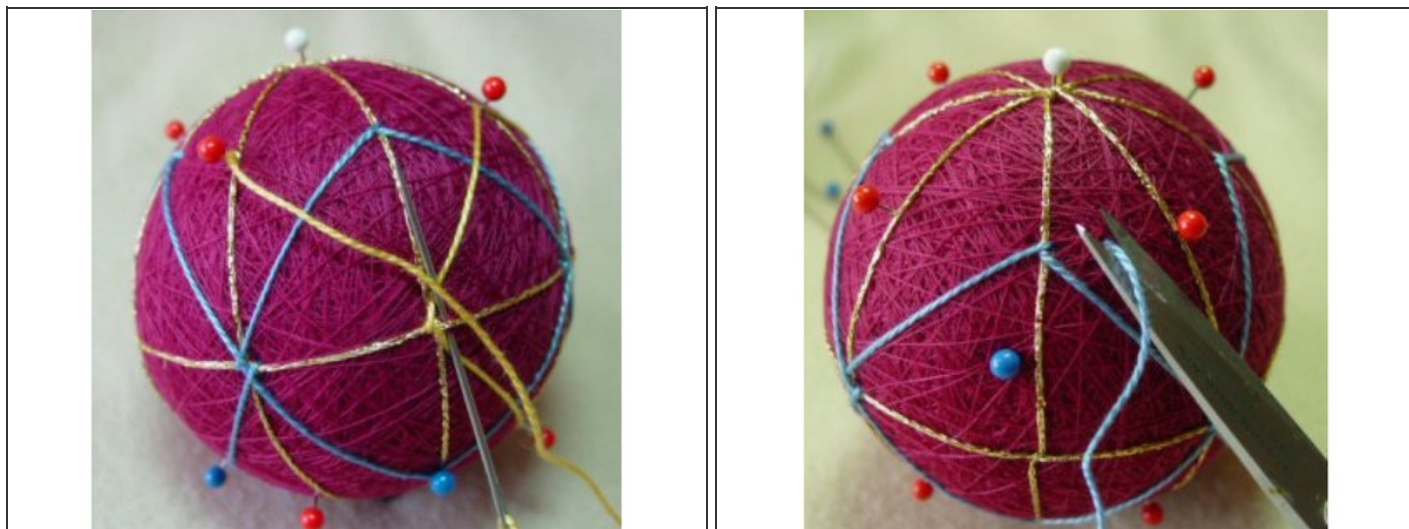
**Step 4 — Divide the sections.**

- Measure off 4 or more wraps of metallic thread and thread the needle. Enter the needle a little bit away from the North Pole, bringing it out at the North Pole. Pull the thread through to hide the tail in the wrap. Start at the North Pole and wrap around to the South Pole, passing along one of the equator pins. Come back up to North Pole, pivot to the next equator pin, and wrap around. Continue in this manner until you've divided the ball into 8 vertical sections divided by the obi. Tack at the North Pole and South Pole, and clip thread at the surface. Tack each intersection of equator and vertical marking thread. Remove all pins except the North and South Pole pins. Place pins halfway between obi and North Pole and between obi and South Pole on each line, alternating colors.



**Step 5 — Embroider a square.**

- Cut a working length of the first color of pearl cotton (your choice) and thread the needle.
- Enter the needle a small distance away from one colored pin (A) on the northern hemisphere, and bring it out at the pin, pulling the tail of the thread under.
- Bring the needle down and right to equator point B, and take a small stitch around the marking lines, going “above” the vertical marking line. Then pull the thread down and left to pin C (the pin in the southern hemisphere opposite pin A) and insert the needle under thread wrapping, pulling out to equator point D.
- Turn the ball so that pin C is pointing up. Take a small stitch around the equator marking threads. Turn the ball so that you’re back to the starting point, and insert the needle under the thread wrapping. You’ve stitched a square, going from top to right to bottom to left.

**Step 6 — Repeat.**

- Move 2 pins to the left, so that you are at the next pin of this colored pin set (skip a marking line). Repeat the stitching sequence on this and the remaining 2 sets of lines for this pin set. Your stitches at the obi will overlap each other to create an interwoven effect as more rows are stitched; you should have 4 squares using 1 set of colored pins. You can remove this set of pins, but place 1 pin in the middle of the square where you began stitching as a placeholder. End off the thread by running under the base wrap and clipping at the surface. Using the second color of pearl cotton, stitch the same pattern on the alternate set of marking lines.

## Step 7 — Finish the squares.



- Return to the first color of pearl cotton at the first square, and stitch another round; repeat on each square for this set. Change to the second color, start at the first square for that set, and stitch another round. Repeat this sequence until the pattern builds to the desired effect — usually about 5 to 7 rounds. The squares will interweave between colors, and the equator design will create smaller interwoven diamonds within the same color.

## Step 8 — Embellish.



- Use the metallic thread and stitch 1 finishing row around each square, staying in the alternating pattern to keep the interwoven effect intact. Use metallic thread to make crossline embellishments in the center of each square and at the Poles. Remove pins. With the eye of the needle, gently adjust any threads that need “nudging” into place. Enjoy your temari, a piece of Japanese folk art.

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